SCOPING DOCUMENT
for
Modification or Removal
of the
Fort Field Diversion Structure
Provo River, Utah

Introduction

The Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission (**Mitigation Commission**), the Central Utah Water Conservancy District (District) and the U.S. Department of the Interior (Department) are proposing to remove or modify the Fort Field diversion structure located approximately 3.8 miles upstream of Utah Lake on the Provo River just west of Interstate 15 (see Figures 1 and 2 following the end of this document). The Mitigation Commission, District and Department, collectively referred to as the **Joint Lead Agencies**, have initiated the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) that will analyze and describe the environmental impacts of the proposal.

To complete this analysis we need your input in identifying issues, concerns or suggestions that you may have with this proposal.

Project Background

The Provo River is extensively used as a source for domestic drinking water, irrigation water, hydroelectric power production, recreation, and sport fisheries. The lower portion of the Provo River between the mouth of Provo Canyon and Utah Lake is heavily diverted for irrigation purposes. There are eight diversion structures on the Provo River from the Murdock Diversion Dam, near the mouth of Provo Canyon, to Utah Lake. Historically, the lower portion of the river provided spawning habitat for the June sucker (*Chasmistes liorus*), a federally listed endangered fish species. These diversions structures are often barriers to upstream fish migration. The Fort Field Diversion often restricts June sucker spawning to only the lowest 3.8 miles of the Provo River. The lower 4.9 miles of the Provo River has been listed as critical habitat for the species.

Significant investments have been made to acquire water rights to provide seasonal instream flows in lower Provo River and will continue to be made to potentially provide a year-round minimum instream flow. Many of the existing diversion dams often function as "dry dams" which divert the entire stream flow of the Provo River with the exception of small quantities of water that leak through the diversion structures. These diversion structures are not capable of bypassing a measured amount of water for downstream users, particularly instream flow uses.

The June Sucker Recovery Plan lists removing fish passage barriers, including the barrier at the Fort Field Diversion, as high priority action items.

Need for Action

The proposed project is **needed** to provide unimpaired fish migration and to allow accurate and real-time bypass and measurement of river instream flows for fish, wildlife and recreation purposes while maintaining the ability to meet

diversion requirements for canal companies and legal water users who divert water at the Fort Field Diversion structure. The Fort Field Diversion is the lowest diversion structure on the Provo River and is the first barrier to upstream fish migration.

The diversion structure consists of a "kick-leg" dam, concrete sidewalls and a flat concrete sill that lies flush with the bed of the stream (Figure 2). Despite the poor condition of the structure, it still functions as designed and periodically operates as a dry dam. The diversion creates a barrier to upstream fish migration during low flow conditions. Under the existing conditions, aquatic habitat below the dam can become extremely limited during critical spawning periods for June sucker.

Project Purposes

The proposed federal action is intended to achieve the following purposes which will address the underlying need for the project.

- Maintain the ability to meet diversion requirements for canal companies and legal water users who divert water from the diversion
- Provide facilities that create conditions conducive to the successful passage of fish species, particularly June sucker
- Provide capability for bypass and real-time measurement of instream flows
- Minimize disruption to and/or restore natural stream channel and flow characteristics and riparian and wetland habitats
- Provide for low operation and maintenance costs and simplicity of operation

Alternatives

The Joint Lead Agencies have conceptually identified several different alternatives that would modify or remove the Fort Field Diversion to meet the purposes and need listed above.

Alternative 1
The Fort Field Diversion structure would be removed. Water right users presently diverting from the Fort Field Diversion would receive their water rights from diversions made at other locations on the Provo River and delivered to the Fort Field canal system through a series of existing and/or new canals, laterals or pipelines.

Alternative 2
The Fort Field Diversion structure would be removed and replaced by pumps.

Alternative 3
The Fort Field Diversion would be modified or replaced with a diversion structure or other features that would not inhibit fish migration and would be able to pass a measured flow.

Alternative 4
The No Action alternative would be analyzed, as required by NEPA. The No Action Alternative describes the impacts that would occur if the present diversion were not removed or replaced. The No Action alternative serves as a baseline comparison for impacts analysis of other alternatives.

Other Related Projects

The Joint Lead Agencies are also proposing to modify or replace the other seven diversion structures on the lower Provo River, the impacts of which will be analyzed as part of a separate analysis. The Fort Field diversion is being analyzed separately in order to complete the project as soon as practical to facilitate the recovery of the endangered June sucker. Although not part of this project, the modification of the other diversion structures will be considered as a cumulative impact and addressed in the environmental analysis.

Your Input is Needed

Scoping is the process by which agencies and the public collaborate to determine the extent of issues and alternatives to be examined in an environmental analysis. This is your opportunity to influence public policy and develop alternative solutions to address this problem.

We are interested in knowing what issues you believe should be considered in our analysis of this project. For instance, the impact to existing water right users on the amount, timing and quality of water delivered will be an issue analyzed in the EA.

Your comments should be submitted to:

Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission
Attention: Maureen Wilson
102 West 500 South, Suite 315
Salt Lake City, UT 84101 or by email to mwilson@uc.usbr.gov.

Your comments will be most useful if received by March 10, 2006.

Additional Opportunities to Comment and the NEPA Process

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires all Federal agencies to analyze and disclose the environmental impacts of their actions. The purpose for NEPA is twofold. First, NEPA requires Federal agencies to be well informed of the environmental consequences of their actions in the hope that better decisions will result. Second, NEPA requires Federal agencies to inform and involve the public in the decision making process, also in the hope that better decisions will result. The Federal action that is "*triggering*" NEPA in this instance is the expenditure of Federal funds to remove or modify the Fort Field Diversion structure.

The NEPA process is a planning process in which alternative solutions to an underlying problem are formulated, the merits of which are identified and evaluated. The Joint Lead Agencies inform the public, through this Scoping Document, of the underlying need or problem (for example, degraded and inaccessible habitat for the endangered June sucker resulting from the Fort Field Diversion). The public is requested to inform the Joint Lead Agencies of issues, concerns or suggestions that they believe should be considered in the environmental analysis. The Joint Lead Agencies convene an Interdisciplinary Team (ID) of resource specialists to develop a range of alternatives that address the problem. The ID team analyzes the environmental impacts of the Alternatives, considering the issues raised by the public during scoping. A Draft EA will be prepared describing the Alternatives and their environmental impacts. The Draft EA will be sent to the public and other interested Federal,

State and local agencies for their review and comment. Comments will be considered, the EA modified as necessary and then a Final EA prepared. The responsible Federal officials will then make a decision as to which Alternative, or combination thereof, to implement based on the findings in the Final EA and input from the public.

If you do not wish to comment at this time, but would like to remain on our mailing list and continue to receive future mailings and information regarding this project please respond by email to mwilson@uc.usbr.gov.

If you would like to talk about the project, please call Maureen Wilson at the Mitigation Commission (801-524-3146) or by email.

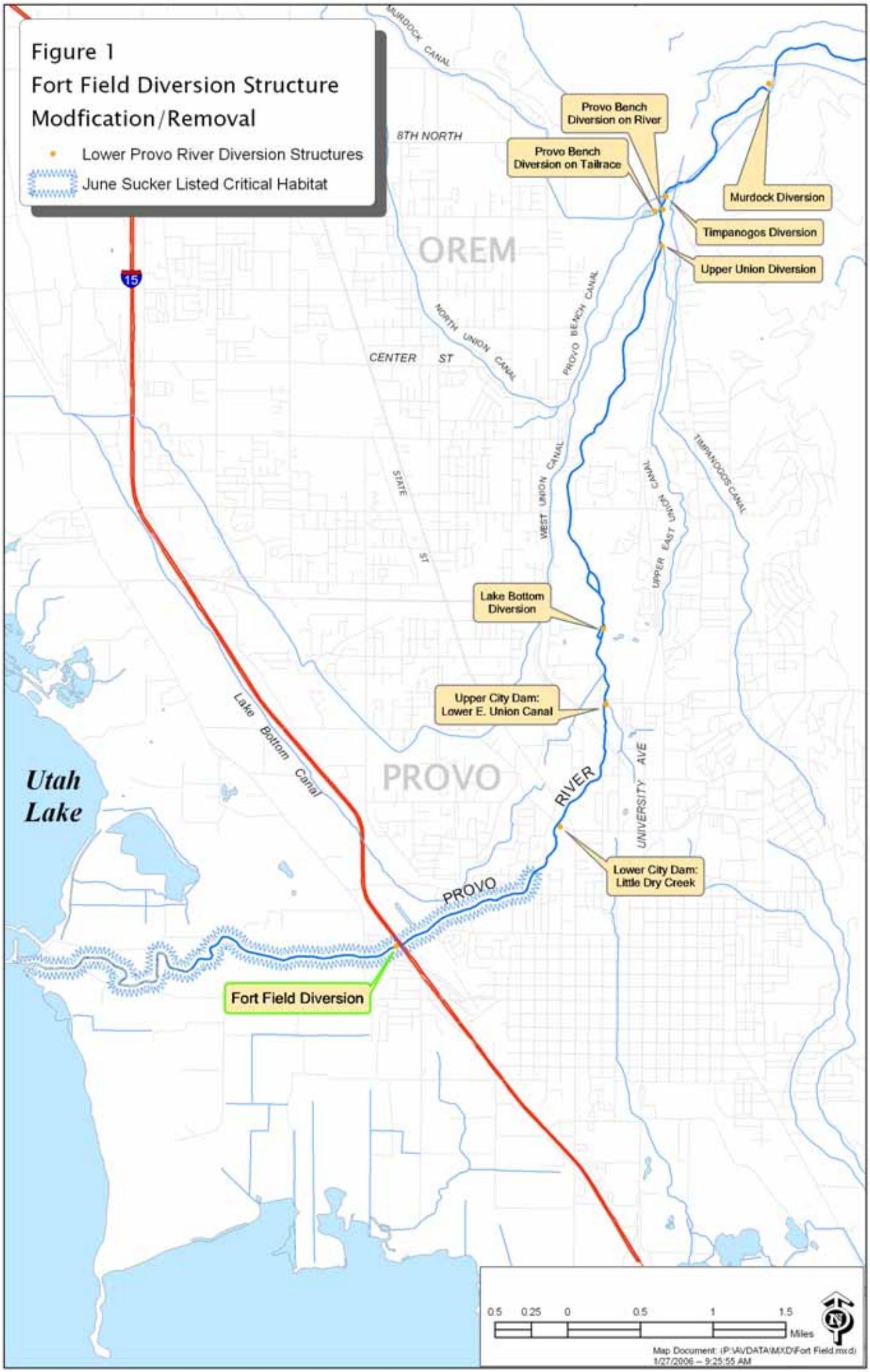
Figure 1
Fort Field Diversion Structure
Modfication/Removal
Lower Provo River Diversion Structures
June Sucker Listed Critical Habitat
MURDOCK CANAL
8TH NORTH
Provo Bench Diversion on River
Provo Bench Diversion on Tailrace
Murdock Diversion
Timpanogos Diversion
Upper Union Diversion
OREM
15
NORTH UNION CANAL
PROVO BENCH CANAL
CENTER ST
WEST UNION CANAL
UPPER EAST UNION CANAL
TIMPANOGOS CANAL
STATE ST
Lake Bottom Diversion
Upper City Dam: Lower E. Union Canal
Lake Bottom Canal
PROVO
RIVER
UNIVERSITY AVE
Utah Lake
Lower City Dam: Little Dry Creek
PROVO
Fort Field Diversion
0.5 0.25 0 0.5 1 1.5
Miles
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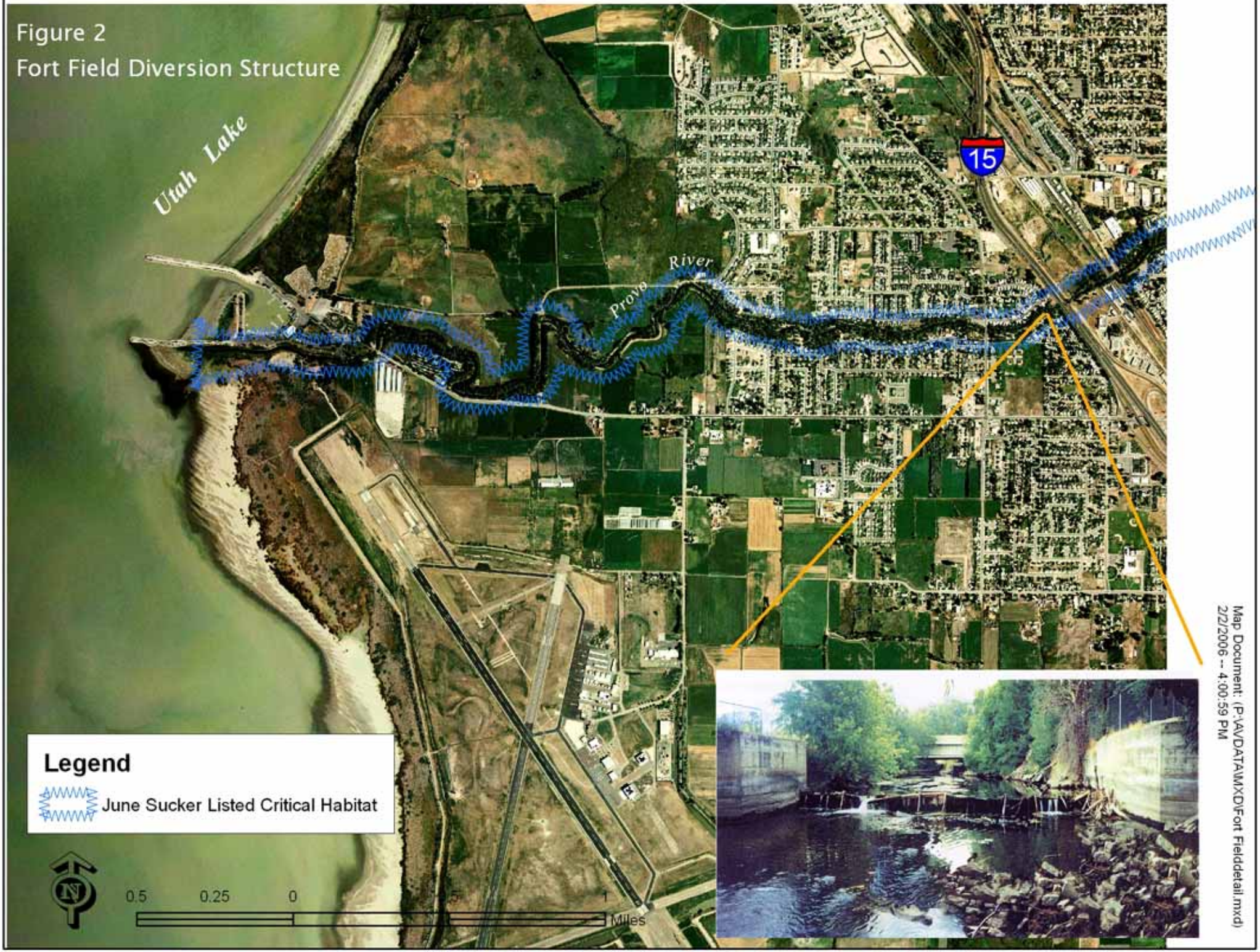
Figure 2
Fort Field Diversion Structure



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